



**Testimony of Elizabeth Adams**  
**Senior Director for Advocacy & Organizing, Transportation Alternatives**  
**Before the New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee and Senate**  
**Finance Committee, February 15, 2022**

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Good afternoon Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Kennedy, and Magnarelli and committee members. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Adams, and I am the Senior Director for Advocacy & Organizing at Transportation Alternatives. For nearly 50 years, Transportation Alternatives has been a leader in the fight to make our streets safer and livable for all New Yorkers. Today, we seek your support for the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act.

We are proud to promote better access to biking, walking, and public transportation at a time when safer streets are needed across our state. The pandemic has exposed disparities in access to public health and livable communities and the climate crisis has made it clear we can no longer accept the status quo of a car-centric culture that pollutes our airways and compromises our health.

We are at a turning point. New York is poised to receive billions of dollars in federal infrastructure funding for large scale transportation projects. US Transportation Secretary, Pete Buttigieg, recently announced a comprehensive national roadway safety strategy in recognition of the national epidemic of traffic violence. And the pandemic has shifted how people commute and navigate their communities. New York has the opportunity to be a national leader on transportation and safer streets for all – and it is time we seize it.

We commend Governor Hochul on her commitment to new infrastructure investment in the proposed FY 23 budget, however, it is critical that the state budget also include deeper investments to combat New York's transit and street safety crisis, and provide municipalities with the local accountability and tools they need to respond to unprecedented levels of traffic violence.

This epidemic impacts hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year, costing the State \$15 billion annually<sup>1</sup>, and resulting in the death of three New Yorkers every day.<sup>2</sup> It is in the interest of New York's fiscal and community wellbeing to cure this crisis.

As such, Transportation Alternatives is proud to join today as a member of the New York State Safe Streets Coalition, nearly 60 organizations across NYS, led by Families for Safe Streets,

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, State by State Crash Data and Economic Cost Index, available at <https://www.transportation.gov/research-and-technology/state-state-crash-data-and-economic-cost-index>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), available at [www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx](http://www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx)



Albany Bicycle Coalition, Bike Walk Tompkins, GObike Buffalo, National Safety Council, New York Bicycling Coalition, Open Plans, Parks & Trails NY and the National Heritage Corridor, Reconnect Rochester, Rochester Bicycling Club, Slow Roll Syracuse, Transportation Alternatives, and Walkable Albany.

Our coalition is working to pass the Crash Victim Rights & Safety Act (CVRSA), seven life-saving bills that will redesign our streets with safety as a priority to protect all road users; address the speeding rampant on our streets; educate drivers on bike/pedestrian safety; and provide support to those personally impacted.

We know what works when it comes to street safety: lowering speed limits saves lives, investing in street design positively shifts driver behavior and improves air quality, and more conscientious road rules makes it possible for everyone to safely use our streets.

Below is the full list of bills included in the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act that we ask the legislature to support.<sup>3</sup> Of particular note, Senate bill S3897 and Senate bill S5130 rely on increased State budgetary investment and we urge the legislature to include them in the F23 Budget. Complete Streets features, such as pedestrian crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike lanes are critical to making our streets safer and more accessible for all, yet the cost of construction can be prohibitive for municipalities. We will not achieve the sustainable future our climate demands of us if we do not make our neighborhoods significantly more walkable and bikeable. Complete streets also benefit our elder and disabled populations and support local businesses through increased foot traffic. For the sake of all of our communities, New York should fund Complete Streets.

<b>Statewide Speed Limit</b>	Authorizes cities, villages and towns (outside NYC) to reduce the speed limit to twenty-five miles per hour.	So2021 (May)	A01007 (Paulin)
<b>Sammy's Law</b>	Allows lower life-saving speed limits in NYC	S524 (Hoylman)	A4655 (Gottfried)
<b>Complete Streets</b>	Increases state funding where the municipality agrees to fund a complete street design feature.	S3897 (Kennedy)	A8936 (Fahy)
<b>Complete Streets Maintenance</b>	Includes, when possible, complete street design features in resurfacing, maintenance and pavement recycling projects and further enable safe access to public roads for all users.	S5130 (Kennedy)	A7782 (Rivera)
<b>Safe Passage</b>	Require drivers pass bicyclists at a safe distance of min. 3 feet.	S4529 (Harckman)	A547 (Steck)
<b>DMV Pre-Licensing Course</b>	Educates NY drivers about safely interacting with vulnerable road users	S1078A (Gounardes)	A5084 (Gallagher)

<sup>3</sup> More information about the legislation in the Crash Victim Rights & Safety Act, and New York State Safe Streets Coalition available at [www.nysafeststreets.org](http://www.nysafeststreets.org)



<b><i>Crash Victim Bill of Rights</i></b>	Guarantee rights & a voice for crash victims and their loved ones in legal proceedings	S8152 (Hoylman)	A9152 (Glick)
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In addition to the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act, Transportation Alternatives urges the State legislature to support a home rule request for localities to manage camera enforcement programs and lower speed limits locally.

2021 was the deadliest year<sup>4</sup> in traffic violence in New York City since the start of Vision Zero in 2013, and was the third year in a row of rising traffic fatalities. New Yorkers want safe streets – and slowing cars down through lower speed limits and speed safety cameras is a proven solution. According to recent polling by Siena College, 78% of New York City voters support speed safety cameras in school zones, across age, race, and borough. The support is clear and the results are evident: following the launch of New York City’s speed safety camera program, there was a 55 percent drop<sup>5</sup> in all traffic fatalities and a 72 percent decline<sup>6</sup> in speeding overall. Yet restrictions continue to hamper our safety. In 2020, nearly 40 percent of people killed in fatal traffic crashes died in speed safety camera zones, when the cameras were turned off between 10pm and 6am, and during weekends, as required under current state law. Automated street enforcement removes police interaction, and the risk of a violent or fatal police traffic stop, and provides the ability to invest back into communities that have long been under-resourced and ignored when it comes to transportation infrastructure.

In summation, we urge the Governor and state legislature to commit to investing in New York’s transportation and infrastructure future through the passage of the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act and allowing localities to meet the moment in street safety with home rule for our cities.

Thank you for your time.

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<sup>4</sup> Transportation Alternatives, January 26, 2022. “Last year was the deadliest under Vision Zero. Here’s how Mayor Adams can save lives in 2022.” Retrieved february 11, 2022 at: <https://www.transalt.org/writing/last-year-was-the-deadliest-under-vision-zero-heres-how-mayor-adams-can-save-lives-in-2022>

<sup>5</sup> NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), June 2018. “Automated Speed Enforcement Program report 2014-2017.” Retrieved February 11, 2022 at: <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/speed-camera-report-june2018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), 2021. “Speed Cameras and Vision Zero: The Case for Speed Cameras 24/7. Retrieved February 11, 2022 at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/speed-cameras-vision-zero-case-for-speed-cameras-24-7.pdf24/7>